



STATE OF IOWA

TERRY E. BRANSTAD
GOVERNOR

KIM REYNOLDS
LT. GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL POLICY
MARK J. SCHOUTEN, DIRECTOR

March 21, 2011

The Honorable Jack Kibbie
The Honorable Kraig Paulsen
Iowa General Assembly
Iowa State Capitol
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

In re: SF 462 and HF 186

Dear Senator Kibbie and Representative Paulsen:

The Iowa General Assembly is currently considering two bills dealing with the synthetic cannabinoid known as K2: SF 462 and HF 186. Both bills would add K2 to the list of illegal schedule I drugs; but HF 186 would set the penalty for delivery of the drug at the class C felony level while SF 462 would treat delivery as an aggravated misdemeanor. Simple possession under both bills would be a serious misdemeanor. HF 186 would also add "bath salts" (MDPV/mephedrone) and *Salvia divinorum* to schedule I and treat all three new drugs as class C felonies.

Based on reports about these three drugs—from around Iowa and the rest of the U.S.—ODCP believes that of the two bills, H.F. 186 offers the best policy option for protecting Iowa youth from these up-and-coming and potentially dangerous drugs. It appears that the potency of these drugs is significantly greater than marijuana.

The felony provisions in HF 186 are the same as other schedule I controlled substances with hallucinogenic properties and—arguably—similar potencies, e.g. LSD, PCP (angel dust), and MDMA (ecstasy). I have enclosed with this letter a chart showing the proposed penalties for the drugs in SF 462 and HF 186 and the penalties for similar drugs that are currently scheduled under Iowa law.

Dr. Edward Bottei, MD, Iowa Statewide Poison Control Center, in speaking of K2, bath salts, and salvia, has said that

... these chemicals, the synthetic cannabinoids, mephedrone and MDPV, are potent hallucinogens which produce adverse health effects equal to or worse than other hallucinogens like PCP or LSD."

Dr. Anthony Scalzo, MD, Director, Division of Medical Toxicology, Saint Louis University School of Medicine, in speaking specifically of bath salts says that these chemicals

. . . have been irresponsibly added to innocent salts such as sodium bicarbonate (baking soda) magnesium sulfate (Epsom salts) and the added stimulant drug results in hallucinations, extreme stimulation, paranoia, agitation, and altered thoughts which have led to suicide and self-harm.

Dr. Scalzo urges that Iowa "take a strong stance on these drugs that are no less toxic than cocaine and methamphetamine."

Finally, I have enclosed a summary of news media articles dealing with these drugs, beginning with an article describing with the death of Indianola's David Rozga, who smoked K2 last summer and then committed suicide. Although these articles provide anecdotal rather than hard statistical evidence about the use and effect of these new drugs, they raise serious questions about their potency.

Please let me know if there is anything else our office can do in assisting the General Assembly in these matters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark J. Schouten', with a stylized, cursive script.

Mark J. Schouten

cc: The Honorable Mike Gronstal
The Honorable Paul McKinley
The Honorable Gene Fraise
The Honorable Tom Hancock
The Honorable Steven J. Soddors
The Honorable Kent Sorenson
The Honorable Clel Baudler
The Honorable Ako Abdul-Samad
The Honorable Joel Fry
The Honorable Thomas R. Sands